be worked out in a meeting of techical experts in August, 2006. The meeting would also discuss the options for delimitation of the maritime boundary.

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

314. DR. VIJAY MALLYA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a forum for regional co-operation among the Republic of China, Russia and some of the Central Asian countries and Iran have been formed under the title of Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO);

(b) whether India is a member of the Organisation;

(c) what are the advantages for our country becoming a member of SCO; and

(d) to what extent such a membership would affect the present Indo-US relations in view of the keen interest taken by Iran in SCO?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) The six Member countries of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO) are China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The four SCO Observer countries are Mongolia, India, Iran and Pakistan.

(c) The SCO provides an opportunity for India to cooperate with members and observers to increase economic interaction, cultural exchanges and work jointly on counter-terrorism and against illegal trafficking of narcotics.

(d) India's association with the SCO does not affect its relations with any country.

Police verification for passport

315. DR. VIJAY MALLYA:
MISS ANUSUIYA UIKEY:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a move to do away with police verification in the matter of issue of passports to certain selected categories of Indian citizens;